

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /075 W

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FM AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6425

INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USMISSION USUN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CAPE TOWN 1311

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SHUM, SF

SUBJ: POLICE RAID SQUATTERS AT WHITE CHURCHES

REF: (A) CAPE TOWN 1249, (B) CAPE TOWN 1205

SUMMARY: FOLLOWING DESTRUCTION OF MODDERDAM AND WERKGENOT SQUATTERS CAMPS IN LATE AUGUST, NUMBER OF COLORED AND WHITE CHURCHES ERECTED TENTS ON CHURCH GROUNDS TO HOUSE SEVERAL THOUSAND SQUATTERS. MORNING OF SEPT 9 POLICE STAGED PRE-DAWN RAID AT 2 LEADING WHITE CHURCHES, ARRESTING OVER 100 SQUATTERS. TRANSKEI AMBASSADOR ISSUED STATEMENT CRITICIZING SAG FOLLOWING MEETING WITH CONCERNED CITIZENS COMMITTEE HERE. END SUMMARY

1. REFTELS REPORTED COMPLETION OF DESTRUCTION OF MODDERDAM AND WERKGENOT SQUATTER CAMPS WITH ESTIMATED POPULATION OF UP TO 15,000 PEOPLE. SINCE THEN, CHURCH LEADERS, IN EFFORT TO PROVIDE TEMPORARY SHELTER FOR AT LEAST
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SOME OF THOSE RENDERED HOMELESS AND TO DRAMATIZE THE ISSUE OF CONTINUING DEMOLITIONS, ERECTED TENTS ON CHURCH GROUNDS PROVIDING ACCOMMODATION FOR AN ESTIMATED 3,000 PEOPLE. ROMAN CATHOLIC AND ANGLICAN CHURCHES IN BOTH WHITE AND COLORED AREAS RESPONDED TO THE CALL BY CHURCH LEADERS. MOST VISIBLE AND CONTROVERSIAL WERE THE "TENT CITIES" ESTABLISHED AT ANGLICAN

ST. GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL LOCATED DIRECTLY ACROSS FROM
HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT IN DOWNTOWN CAPE TOWN AND AT
ST. THOMAS' CHURCH IN POSH WHITE SUBURB OF RONDEBOSCH.

2. INITIAL POLICE RESPONSE WAS CAUTIOUS AND LOW-KEY
BUT BY EARLY THIS WEEK TEAMS OF POLICE AND OFFICIALS BEGAN
VISITING SEVERAL CHURCHES IN COLORED AREAS
OF CITY, DISMANTLING AND CONFISCATING TENTS. MORNING
OF SEPT 9 POLICE RAIDED ST. GEORGE'S AND ST. THOMAS'
AT 4:30 AM, INSPECTING DOCUMENTS AND, ACCORDING PRESS
REPORTS, ARRESTING MORE THAN 100 MALES. WOMEN SQUATTERS
WERE NOT IMMEDIATELY ARRESTED BUT WERE GIVEN SUMMONS
TO APPEAR IN COURT SEPT 26 ON CHARGE OF LIVING IN A
WHITE AREA.

3. DAY BEFORE RAIDS WERE CARRIED OUT, TANSKEI AMBASSADOR
TO SA, PROF. N.J. NJISANE, MET WITH CONCERNED
CITIZENS COMMITTEE HEADED BY PROG MP NIC OLIVER.
(CAPE TOWN 1205). AFTER THE MEETING, NJISANE ISSUED STATEMENT
SAYING TRANSKEI UNABLE TO HOUSE OR PROVIDE WORK FOR "LARGE
INFLUX" OF SQUATTERS AND EXPRESSING "FRUSTRATION" AT INABILITY
TO GET SAG TO NEGOTIATE THE ISSUE. NJISANE QUOTED AS SAYING
THAT SAG ACTIONS WERE CAUSING TRANSKEIANS TO QUESTION WISDOM OF
OPTING FOR INDEPENDENCE. HE ADDED THAT THROUGH INTERVENTION
OF TRANSKEI OFFICIALS SAG HAD AGREED TO DELAY DEMOLITION OF
UNIBELL CAMP (THOUGHT TO CONTAIN ANOTHER 15-20,000 PEOPLE) FOR
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2 WEEKS UNTIL SEPT 15 ALTHOUGH HE HAD ASKED FOR THREE MONTHS
DELAY.

4. COMMENT - BULK OF 15,000 SQUATTERS EVICTED TO DATE
HAVE RELOCATED IN OTHER SQUATTER CAMPS OR MOVED INTO ALREADY
CROWDED QUARTERS IN BLACK TOWNSHIPS. ONLY A MERE HANDFUL ARE
THOUGHT TO HAVE RETURNED TO TRANSKEI OR CISKEI. NONETHELESS,
SAG EFFORTS LIKELY TO CONTINUE. DEMOLITION OF CAMP AT KRAAIFONTEIN
(2,000 PEOPLE) BEGAN SEPT 8 BUT WAS HALTED AFTER
COMMENCEMENT OF HEAVY RAINS. AS WEATHER BEGINS TO IMPROVE,
SAG PROGRAM TO CLEAR SQUATTER CAMPS SEEM LIKELY TO CONTINUE.
FRUSTRATION OF CHURCHMEN AND OTHER "LIBERALS" AT INABILITY TO
DEFLECT SAG FROM ITS PATH AND TO EFFECTIVELY ASSIST
SQUATTERS IS INTENSE AND MAY LEAD TO RASH ACTS ON PART OF A
FEW INDIVIDUALS. THERE IS NO RPT NO SIGN THAT CRITICISM BY
TRANSKEI OFFICIALS LIKELY TO HAVE SUFFICIENT WEIGHT TO
SIGNIFICANTLY INFLUENCE SAG POLICY. WILLIAMS

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Message Attributes

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